



Illustration by Debbie McNiel

ASTRAGALUS BARRII **BARR'S MILKVETCH**

Barr's Milkvetch is a long-lived perennial that grows in low, dense mats or mounds. Leaves have 3 narrowly lance shaped leaflets and are 1-4 cm long, densely covered with short white hairs. Stipules at the leaf bases are membranous. Pea-like purple or pinkish-purple flowers are borne in a narrow, open, few-flowered inflorescence. The petals are 7-17 mm long. The calyx is 2.8-5 mm long and densely covered with long, white hairs. The silvery white, hairy pod is narrowly elliptical, 4-8 mm long, and 1-2 mm in diameter. Flowering in May-early June, fruiting late May-June.

The only other mat-forming species with 3-leaflets in the range of *A. BARRII* in Montana are *A. GILVIFLORUS* and *A. HYALINUS*. Both have white flowers and a generally longer calyx tube of 6-16 mm compared to the *A. BARRII* calyx tube length of 2.8-5 mm. They also have peduncles that are absent or shorter than 3.5 mm compared to *A. BARRII* peduncle length of 7-24 mm. A hand lens or microscope are needed for positive identification.